

iCHAMPS

Youth Development Program

Report

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iCHAMPS is a nonprofit organization with a mission to promote safe & healthy neighborhoods through youth development, positive community-law enforcement relations, & collaborative partnerships. iCHAMPS provides three main services to the community: Youth development, professional development training, & evaluation. First, iCHAMPS teams of police officers & social workers to teach social emotional learning skills to elementary & middle school students during recess time, physical education classes, & out-of-school time programs. Second, iCHAMPS provides law enforcement officers, educators, & social service professionals training on crime prevention. Lastly, iCHAMPS assess community assets and needs, coordinate implementation efforts & test program effectiveness.

iCHAMPS in Salt Lake City School District (SLCSD)

For the present project, the iCHAMPS Youth Development Program was implemented in 13 schools (grades 4-8; 571 students) within the Salt Lake City School District (please see Appendix A for the list of the participating schools). The program was funded by a Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention 2017-2018 Grant from the Utah State Board of Education.

Salt Lake City Police Department officers were recruited to team up with a social worker and engage students at each school during physical education classes. Five police officers were selected to participate in the iCHAMPS Youth Development Program. Two of the officers are women and two of Latina/o ethnic background. All of the officers patrolled the geographic areas surrounding the iCHAMPS schools.

iCHAMPS Team Roles

The police officers were instructed that her/his role were to focus on building positive relations with students and not engage in any disciplinary or law enforcement duties (please see Appendix B for roles for iCHAMPS staff). Police officers participated in the iCHAMPS program only when she/he were off-duty and not on-duty working patrol. The purpose of selecting off-duty officers was to keep the officers focused on the iCHAMPS role of building positive relationships with the youth and not have the officers leave on other law enforcement work duties.

The social worker's role was to focus on developing a sense of belonging and social emotional skills among students, as well as to teach drug prevention skills. The PE teacher focused on conducting his/her lessons and were still responsible for student behavior and discipline.

iCHAMPS Class Structure

The program started on January 8, 2018 and ended on June 6, 2018. Depending on the school's PE schedules, the iCHAMPS team, which was made up of a police officer and a social worker, consistently engaged students from 13 schools each week, scheduling the same time with the same school each week (each police officer were assigned two to five schools and had three to seven contact hours per week). The police officers would participate in the same school each week in order to develop relationships with the students. However, police officers would occasionally attend different schools to cover for another officer if she/he had to miss a scheduled iCHAMPS school. The exchanging of police officers between schools provided the students opportunities to develop relationships with police officers outside of their assigned police officer.

At the beginning of each class, the social worker would provide the students a brief lesson based on the evidence-based substance abuse prevention curriculum, Keepin it REAL. As soon as the discussion was over, the PE teacher would inform the class the activities for the day. The iCHAMPS team (social worker and police officer) engaged students while participating in all activities, such as four square, capture the flag, soccer, and basketball. The iCHAMPS team would focus on providing positive feedback and minimize the use of corrective actions. Although the PE teachers were still responsible for classroom discipline, the iCHAMPS team supported the PE teacher by following her/his instructions and modeling the appropriate behavior. After the class, the iCHAMPS team would quickly debrief each other to identify potential student leaders, students that seemed isolated, activities that worked well in teaching social emotional skills, methods that supported PE teacher, etc. Ideas that were elicited from the debriefing were shared with PE teachers for input and potentially implement during PE class.

The format for the PE classes differed in some schools. One school had two PE classes at the same time in one gym separated by a barrier. In this format, the iCHAMPS team would take turns engaging the students from the different classes. One school created an "iCHAMPS time" for the entire sixth grade to participate in the program. The iCHAMPS team would engage the three 6th grade classes during this time in a variety of activities that were facilitated by the sixth grade teachers. One school had the iCHAMPS team engage the students during a dance program, which culminated in the iCHAMPS team performing a dance routine with the entire 5th grade class of students. This community event included student's family, friends and teachers.

Partnerships

Several programs partnered with iCHAMPS. One school also had the PlayWorks program and occasionally a staff member would join the iCHAMPS team to lead different activities with the students. In another school, iCHAMPS partnered with Ballet West's ICANDO Outreach Dance Program, which taught the entire 5th grade class different types of dances throughout the year culminating in a community event where students performed three different dances. A gang prevention specialist from the Promising Youth Program joined iCHAMPS to engage youth in two schools a week. These partnership further exposed the police officers to other professionals beyond school officials and develop positive relations community stakeholders.

Summer School Programs

iCHAMPS teams continue to engage youth during the Discovery Club Summer Camps in seven schools, all which participated in iCHAMPS during the regular school year. The format during the summer programs significantly differ from the regular school year schedule. The iCHAMPS teams are scheduled during more physically active sessions, such as arts, sports, and free time as opposed to academic sessions. The iCHAMPS teams stay at each school for half of the day (3 hours) and engage students from multiple grades (incoming 1st to 6th for elementary and 6th-8th for middle schools). iCHAMPS teams engaged 210 students during the summer school program.

Evaluation

An outside evaluator from the University of Utah conducted a mixed-methods design evaluation of the iCHAMPS Youth Development Program that was implemented during the regular school year (not the summer program). Interviews were conducted with the school principals, PE teachers, police officers and the social worker, and iCHAMPS Executive Director. Additionally, pre/post tests were administered to a percentage of schools that had parental permission for data collection.

Qualitative Preliminary Findings (Interviews)

The PE teachers reported that student behavior improved in class, especially after the iCHAMPS team had build relationships with the students. They also reported that attitudes towards the specific police officer had improved but not sure if it generalized to other police officers. PE teachers reported that many of their student's families have had negative experiences with the police so iCHAMPS provided a safe space to improve relationships, especially if the police officer patrolled the same neighborhood of the school. PE teachers reported that police officers would provide students with direction for a game and encourage them to participate. PE teachers stated that the iCHAMPS team would "jump right in" and engage the students in any activity that was being played. The iCHAMPS team earned the respect and "went a long way" with the students. PE teachers reported that the social worker created good connections with the students and also provided great message about staying away from drugs. It was helpful that the social worker was bilingual. The social worker reported that the female students tended to look up to the female police officers as role models.

PE teachers appreciated the constant communication between the iCHAMPS social worker regarding the program, how to improve services and about the students. PE teachers felt that she/he were better able to do her/his job because student relationships with the iCHAMPS team led to students more likely to participate in the activities, follow the rules, and practice problem-solving in a peaceful way and able to better focus on students with challenging behavior. iCHAMPS provided the opportunity for the teacher to address the physical, mental, and emotional needs of the students. The iCHAMPS team support for PE teacher made students feel special ("now my best

class” expressed one teacher). iCHAMPS were supportive of the teachers while not taking away the power and authority of the teacher.

Principals reported less office referrals for the class that had the iCHAMPS team. Engaging students by the iCHAMPS team in meaningful ways increased the students sense of belonging. Principals reported that students were behaved better when iCHAMPS team was there. Stated that, “felt that students act more appropriate when they feel like they belong...especially for more challenging students” One elementary school principal reported that some students used to hide under the tables when they thought police were coming. Students are vocal about not like the police. Positive interactions over time can change the opinion of students, families and community. Another principal believed that iCHAMPS had, “a primary effect on the students and secondary effect on the family.” iCHAMPS provided an opportunity for police officers to humanize community members and community would humanize the officers too.” Principals reported that iCHAMPS definitely effective in the elementary school, especially the upper grades (4, 5, 6) but may also be helpful in middle schools. Earlier is better before students develop too harsh attitudes of police. iCHAMPS broke down barriers between students and police officers, view the officers and non-threatening and officers more caring when view bigger picture when dealing with neighborhood.

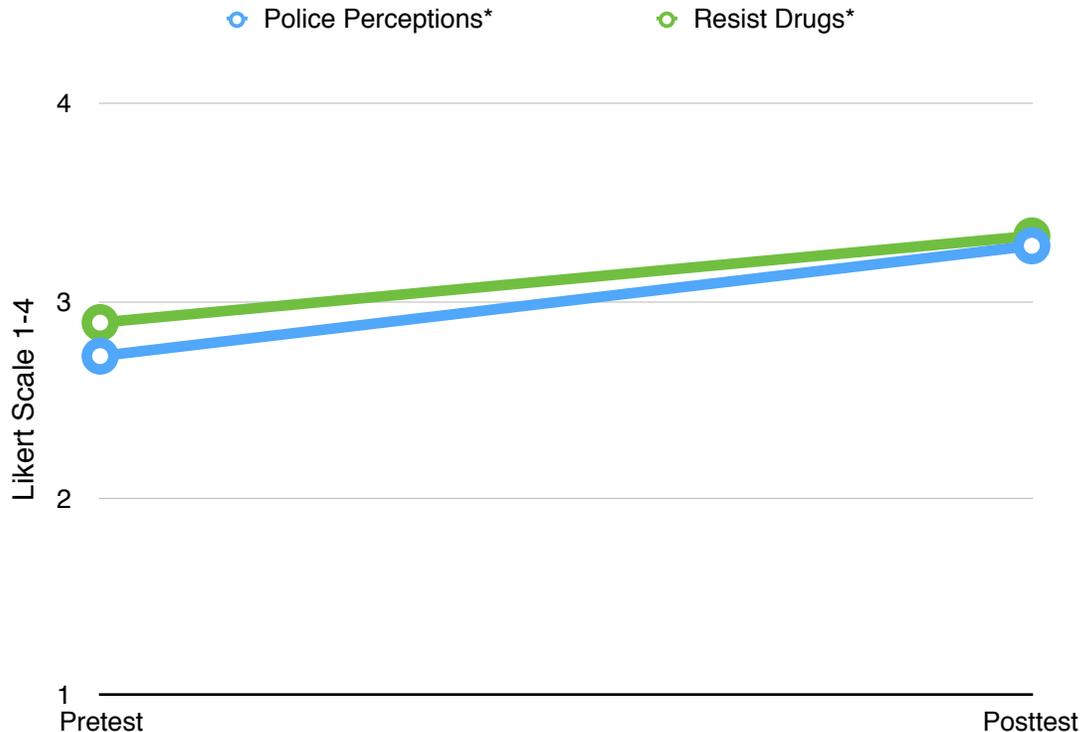
Police officers reported that iCHAMPS gave them a chance to interact with the community in a positive manner, which was a large difference compared to being on patrol and constantly being called to address criminal issues. They also reported that the program humanized police officers to the students and school officials. One officer reported that iCHAMPS gave them the opportunity the work at a more personal level and provided a greater sense of purpose. Police officers reported that several students reported that they also wanted to be police officers when they grew up and asked several questions about being a police officer. The female officers were especially sought after the female students as mentors.

Following are two examples from the interviews of how iCHAMPS can generalize to other positive relations beyond the students in the classroom and the school. Principal statement “My favorite example is when officer stepped in when a student with autism was having a meltdown. The officer volunteered to go see this student who was not part of iCHAMPS program to intervene because the officer met student in hallway earlier in year. The student always spoke to officer after that and the student wanted to be an police officer. In an other example, a police officer reported “I was working patrol, called to a home for a child welfare concern. Lots of kids in the house, the mother was very defensive at first. One child recognized officer and ran to greet the officer with a hug. It totally de-escalated the situation. Mother became more relaxed. It lightened the mood and then the mother was fully cooperated with no issues.”

Quantitative Preliminary Results (Surveys)

Pretest surveys were administered at the beginning of the iCHAMPS program to a randomly selected schools after parents permissions were granted. Posttest surveys were administered in the final week of the program. Surveys had questions regarding

perceptions of police and refusal skills for drug use. Preliminary results found that students improved positive perceptions of police officers and learn skills to resist drug use. Further analyzes will provide which students gained most from the iCHAMPS program (e.g., differences in age, gender, school, past experiences with police, etc).



* Pretests is statistically significant different from posttests

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from principals, PE teachers and police were police officers take part in iCHAMPS because police “see students (& community) in a slightly different (positive) light may increase compassion, humanizing both sides, makes kids think “I want to go into law enforcement *to help.*”

Also recommended to extend iCHAMPS to all schools and all grades, or at least 4th-6th grade. Although this may be financially prohibitive, better targeting and strategic scheduling may provide more student participants. For example, the entire 6th grade may be the focus on all participating elementary schools. This may reduce the amount of schools but will increase a larger cohort of students moving to middle school.

Also recommended was that iCHAMPS should remind students that iCHAMPS team is made up of a police officer and a social worker because sometimes the students forget that there is a police officer interacting with them. Police officers usually wore comfortable civilian clothes for active play. Occasionally the police officers would wear her/his uniform and the students were supposed that the officer was truly from the

police department. It was recommended to wear the uniform at various times throughout the school year.

Police officers recommended more training on difference developmental stages on children and adolescents to understand the students better. Also wanted to provide more drug prevention training to the students.

The drug prevention lesson plan was sometimes difficult to implement because students were ready to play. This was especially true in less structured classes. Therefore, some recommendations were to first establish relationship and then have discussions on drug prevention. Also, for elementary schools, iCHAMPS should make a game out of the drug prevention lessons. Structure the lessons consistently from the very start of the program implementation so that the PE teachers have the expectation of starting all classes with the drug lesson plan.

Appendix A

PARTICIPATING SLCS D SCHOOLS IN THE ICHAMPS PROGRAM

SCHOOLS	STUDENTS	CLASSES	MINUTES/WEEK
Bryant Middle	42	1	45
Glendale Middle	73	2	90
Northwest Middle	69	2	45
Backman Elementary	74	3	90
Edison Elementary	22	1	45
Franklin Elementary	27	1	45
Jackson Elementary	21	1	45
Meadowlark Elementary	21	1	45
Mountain View Elementary	25	1	45
Newman Elementary	62	3	90
Riley Elementary	58	3	45
Rose Park Elementary	54	3	45
Washington Elementary	23	1	45
TOTAL = 13	571	23	720

Appendix B

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES OF ICHAMPS STAFF

Program Director

- Understand the student discipline policies of Salt Lake City School District
- Oversee budget, finances, supplies, and grant writing
- Establish time-line and program planning
- Maintain and update directories, forms, and flyers.
- Schedule programming with schools
- Learn and implement violence and drug prevention strategies from the evidence-based programs, Life Skills Training and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, while engaging students during physical education classes and recess.
- Practice positive reinforcement with students, police officers, volunteers, and school officials
- Focus on building positive relationships (e.g., positive role models, adult mentors, informal counselors) with students
- Refrain from the disciplinarian role
- Prepare invoices for school district
- Collaborate with school liaisons and other agencies who provide support services
- Select, train, and manage off-duty Salt Lake City Police Department officers, youth workers, and volunteers
- Manage program data and initiating program evaluation
- Oversee public relations and presentations
- Other responsibilities as needed

Youth Workers

- Learn and implement violence and drug prevention strategies from the evidence-based programs, Life Skills Training and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, while engaging students during physical education classes and recess
- Practice positive reinforcement with students, police officers, volunteers, and school officials
- Focus on building positive relationships (e.g., positive role models, adult mentors, informal counselors) with students
- Refrain from the disciplinarian role
- Assist in volunteer selection, training, and management
- Other responsibilities as needed

Off-Duty Salt Lake City Police Department Officers

- Focus on building positive relationships (e.g., positive role models, adult mentors, informal counselors) with students
- Refrain from disciplinarian or law enforcement roles

- Learn and implement violence and drug prevention strategies from the evidence-based programs, Life Skills Training and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, while engaging students during physical education classes and recess
- Practice positive reinforcement with students, youth workers, volunteers, and school officials
- Assist in volunteer selection, training, and management
- Other responsibilities as needed

Volunteers

- Learn and implement violence and drug prevention strategies from the evidence-based programs, Life Skills Training and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, while engaging students during physical education classes and recess
- Data entry
- Act as an advisor
- Practice positive reinforcement with students, youth workers, police officers, volunteers, and school officials
- Focus on building positive relationships (e.g., positive role models, adult mentors, informal counselors) with students
- Refrain from the disciplinarian role
- Other responsibilities as needed